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QUESTIONS: PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION AND
DEVELOPMENT

Public administration and development

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 49/136 of 19 December 1994, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its resumed fiftieth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a consolidated report on public administration and development. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

A. Background

2. For public administration and finance systems of Governments world wide, the decade of the 1990s has presented new and perplexing challenges. Mercurial domestic influences and unpredictable external factors have combined to create, for a significant number of Governments, a difficult environment that constrains decision-making and compromises performance improvement. Diverse national circumstances have, for many Governments, generated a condition of permanent crisis management in the public sector and a need to establish a framework for stable and sustainable human development. These challenges require a targeted, pragmatic and well-defined framework for institutional strengthening and capacity-building in support of governance and effective administrative and financial management systems.

3. Throughout the world, many countries face the complex task of trying to redefine the role of government in the pursuit of sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Among the challenges arising from that pursuit is how to introduce efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness into the way government does business.

4. It was within this context that the Pan-African Conference of Ministers of the Civil Service held at Tangier, Morocco, in June 1994 adopted the Tangier Declaration (see A/49/495, annex), which stressed, among other things, the necessity of competent public administration for successful sustainable development. The Declaration called for the convening of a global conference on that theme.

5. Acting on the recommendation of the Tangier Declaration, the General Assembly adopted resolution 49/136 on public administration and development, in which it recognized the important role that Governments and public administrations can play in addressing new responsibilities arising from the pursuit of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, and also recognized the need for strengthened public administrative and financial management capacities in order to ensure a civil service that is responsive to the needs of the people.

6. The General Assembly also acknowledged the importance of exchanging views and experiences in order to promote a better understanding of the role of public administration in development and enhance international cooperation in this field.

7. Accordingly, the General Assembly decided to resume in March-April 1996 its fiftieth session in order to examine the question of public administration and development. The session will promote an exchange of experiences, review the activities of the United Nations system in this field and make recommendations as appropriate. It will be designed to analyse the role of public administration in today's changing environment, based on an analysis of the role of the public sector, as well as to review the activities of the United Nations programme in this field.

B. Preparations and process

8. Preparations for the resumed session began almost immediately following the adjournment of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, with the following principal objectives in mind: (a) to heighten international awareness of the key role of public administration in development; (b) to provide a candid forum for the exchange of experiences; and (c) to strengthen the United Nations system for capacity-building in public administration and finance, and to tailor its approach to country-specific conditions.

9. The preparatory strategy involved a series of reports and meetings, culminating in the twelfth biennial meeting of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance, as requested in resolution 49/136. First, in March 1995, under the auspices of the Department for Development Support and Management Services of the Secretariat, a technical committee consisting of representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) and Harvard University met to analyse the resolution, to develop the main issues to be considered at the resumed session and to establish an overall thematic framework for the preparatory reports and meetings.

10. On the basis of the analysis of the resolution, the technical committee developed four main themes to be considered at the resumed session: (a) strengthening capacity in public administration; (b) the role of public administration in promoting social development; (c) the role of public administration in the development of infrastructure facilities and protecting the environment; and (d) the role of public administration in the management of development programmes.

11. Following a series of consultative meetings in April, which included Member States, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, research institutions and the private sector, the technical committee met again in May further to develop and refine the themes into two distinct categories: the role of public administration in development, and capacity-building for effective administration. Within those classifications, 11 specific topics were identified to serve as pegs for discussion at the twelfth meeting of the Group of Experts.

12. Under the main theme "The role of public administration" the topics were: sustained economic growth, the promotion of social development, the facilitation

of infrastructure development and the protection of the environment, the promotion of public-private partnerships, the management of development programmes, and the maintenance of a legal framework for development. The specific topics under the theme "Capacity-building in public administration" were the enhancement of policy development capacity, organizational strengthening, improved civil service systems, the strengthening of financial management for development, human resource development for the public sector, and the development of administrative capacities for post-conflict and crisis conditions.

13. Prior to the commencement of the twelfth meeting of the Group of Experts, the Department for Development Support and Management Services convened an informal inter-agency working group on 28 July 1995. Attended by representatives of the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), ILO, UNDP and the World Bank, the inter-agency working group's main objectives were to review the activities of the agencies under their respective public administration and finance programmes and to recommend common issues to the Group of Experts for priority consideration.

14. The inter-agency working group noted the importance of public administration to development and recommended that closer collaboration on specific programmes and projects be developed, especially at the early stages of their formulation, among the agencies to achieve the maximum benefit for developing countries. The group also recommended that all inter-agency programmes in public administration and finance be coordinated, that the United Nations specifically serve as a clearing-house for experiences in public administration reform and innovation and that it facilitate sharing experiences among Governments, as well as among agencies. Additionally, it placed emphasis on "management of change" programmes and the establishment and strengthening of appropriate national institutions to lead those change processes in public administration and finance.

C. Twelfth meeting of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance

15. The twelfth meeting of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance was convened in New York from 31 July to 11 August 1995, to analyse and report the major trends and challenges for public administration in developing countries and to recommend actions for strengthening the role of the United Nations programme in public administration and finance. The twelfth meeting also had an additional significant role, that of being requested by the Assembly to contribute to the preparation of the Secretary-General's consolidated report on public administration and development to be submitted to the Assembly at its resumed fiftieth session. Thirty-seven experts were invited from different regions of the world to attend the meeting, together with representatives from throughout the United Nations system, the specialized agencies, interregional and regional institutions, non-governmental

organizations, the regional commissions and other specialized bodies. A complete analysis of the meeting is contained in the report of the Group of Experts (A/50/525-E/1995/122, annex). Also contained in the report were a total of 103 recommendations for national Governments and 96 recommendations for the United Nations.

D. Objectives of the resumed session of the General Assembly

16. This is the first time that the General Assembly of the United Nations will meet to discuss specifically the question of public administration in development. In the interest of current government efforts to meet the complex development challenges of dealing with the impact of increasing globalization and the expanding role of the market and private sector and of eliminating poverty and promoting social justice, protecting the environment and supporting participatory democracy, the need for a fundamental review of the role of public administration in development is urgent and apparent now more than ever. For nearly 50 years, the United Nations programme in public administration and finance has actively supported technical cooperation areas of administrative restructuring and reform, human resource development, institutional building in training areas, resource mobilization, financial management and the improved performance of public enterprises. The programme has dealt with structure and systems of governance and has sought to strengthen programming and national execution capabilities for resource-efficient development management. By responding to the changing needs of developing countries in strengthening their administrative, financial and information systems for better development management, it is anticipated that better working relationships can be created at the country level between the public and private sector.

17. The primary purpose and underlying objective of the resumed session, therefore, is to heighten international awareness of the vital role of public administration in development, particularly its role in the effectiveness and sustainability of development, and to highlight and gain consensus on the necessity of making public administration reform a high priority on the development agenda. In addition, the resumed session will seek to strengthen the United Nations system and to enable it to implement effectively concepts of public administration and finance that serve the urgent needs of Member States in the most effective manner, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition. It is expected, further, that the Assembly at its resumed session will consider the issues and recommendations set out in the present report and will provide direction on improving the role of the United Nations system in the area of public administration and development.

II. UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

18. Three key aspects of the United Nations activities in public administration for development are highlighted in this section. The first is a review of mandates reflected in General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions, indicating the evolving agenda for technical assistance and supportive research work in public administration and development. This analysis includes a thematic review of those mandates, indicating the key areas of United Nations programmes in public administration. The second is an elaboration of selected exemplary programmes of assistance, illustrating the activities of the United Nations programme for public administration and finance. The third is a review of the contributions of other organizations in the United Nations system concerned with public administration.

A. Review of United Nations mandates in public administration

19. The first call for direct United Nations involvement in improving public administration was made by the General Assembly in its resolution 246 (III) of 4 December 1948, by which it established the International Centre for Training in Public Administration. Over the years that major initiative, which was an experimental one, has evolved into a major, comprehensive and complex set of United Nations system activities. Substantive areas include administrative and civil service reform, human resource development, the role of government in economic development, financial management and resource mobilization and management of public enterprises. The United Nations system supports these activities through a variety of discrete projects and programmes.

20. The overall trend of the various General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions indicates an emphasis on capacity-building through, inter alia, human resource development strategy and an increasing focus on policy and planning for development. The public administration programme was established as technical assistance in public administration. By 1960 it became known as the United Nations assistance in public administration: provision of operational, executive and administrative personnel, and by 1969 as public administration and development, thereby acknowledging the enlargement of the basic concept to capacity-building for identified essential tasks. Activities specified for attention, from time to time, included the role of the public sector in promoting the economic development of developing countries in 1974, public administration and finance in 1975, and budgeting and planning for development in 1976. From 1980 emphasis has been placed on the role of the public sector in promoting the economic development of developing countries, with auxiliary activities concentrating on the role of qualified national personnel in the social and economic development of developing countries, and specialized topics such as the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, the development of human resources, or United Nations programmes of action for African economic recovery and development. Throughout the five decades, the United Nations programme in public administration and finance has focused on building national capacity for formulating and sustaining development activities.

21. A chronology of the most significant components of United Nations system mandates in public administration and development illustrates the increasing flow of initiatives to strengthen public administration so that it could better contribute to development. From the early concept of an international training centre, initiatives were modified to support the establishment and development of regional and national training institutions. Likewise, an initial focus on central government institutions was broadened to include sectoral and local administrations, as well as local governments. Eventually, the emphasis extended also to non-governmental and private organizations, especially in their contribution to the performance of the work of the Government and to the national development objectives. Over the decades references to specific techniques and sectors such as financial management increased and generally replaced the vague calls for general improvement. Two trends continued throughout the five-decade period: (a) a clear call for the United Nations to assist in the dissemination and sharing of information; and (b) an appreciation of the importance of public administration's contribution to development. These two trends were linked in the mid-1960s by the increasingly explicit emphasis on the impact and outcomes of public administration, leading into the 1980s concern with result orientation. It can be expected that the 1990s concern with futures research will soon be reflected in the mandates.

22. A review of the United Nations mandates in public administration and development illustrates that since its inception the core themes of the United Nations effort in public administration have been and should continue to be assisting Member States in two broad areas: (a) generating and disseminating information and experience; and (b) customizing on request the best and most appropriate systems and practices in individual countries. Specific core themes include:

(a) Generating, disseminating and exchanging information on the public sector of different countries, especially innovations and best practices;

(b) Carrying out analytical research on various aspects of the role of the public sector in developing countries and providing guidelines and suggestions;

(c) Strengthening administrative, financial and management institutions and mechanisms that promote both social and economic development in developing countries;

(d) Developing and managing national human resources appropriately in order to undertake the activities of the public sector in the most effective and efficient way;

(e) Supporting the development of vigorous public institutions and a dynamic public service for sustainable development;

(f) Focusing, coordinating and sustaining effort within and among United Nations agencies in the above-mentioned areas.

23. The United Nations system's multi-agency, multifaceted approach, illustrated below, supports national-level activities for building public management capacity, defining programme priorities and promoting enabling conditions for development.

B. United Nations programme in public administration and finance

24. Currently, the activities of the United Nations programme in public administration and finance are carried out within the framework of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 and the fifth programming cycle for UNDP funds. Also, the programme is called upon to respond to unforeseen needs in countries experiencing severe conflicts and crises.

25. The principal objective of the United Nations programme in public administration and finance is to provide assistance to Governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. This is achieved by improving and strengthening their public administration and finance capabilities so as to manage efficiently and effectively their national development plans, policies and programmes.

26. The activities of the programme are complementary to related activities of other organizations in the United Nations system and are carried out in close cooperation and coordination with the relevant regional commissions, specialized agencies and interregional and regional institutes.

27. The programme in public administration and finance includes four types of activities: (a) reports to the United Nations legislative bodies; (b) operationally oriented research and analysis in public administration and finance; (c) training programmes and advisory services; and (d) technical cooperation activities.

28. The first three types of activity are financed from the regular budget of the United Nations, while the technical cooperation activities are financed from extrabudgetary resources provided by UNDP, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, trust funds and recipient Governments.

29. The programme reflects recommendations made at the biennial meetings of experts, ad hoc expert group meetings and interregional seminars of workshops convened by the United Nations in accordance with the mandates given by the legislative bodies. The biennial programme is reviewed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination and is approved by the General Assembly.

30. In the area of public administration, programme activities focus on strengthening administrative and organizational systems at both the central and local levels, improving management methods and practices through modern management techniques and information technology, and legal frameworks and programmes that are sensitive to the global economy. The programme activities also focus on participation and a committed, qualified, loyal, professional and well-trained civil service. In the area of public finance, programme activities focus on the mobilization of domestic and external financial resources, national

and international taxation, financial management and accounting, audit and aid accountability. In the area of the private sector, development programme activities focus on the legal and regulatory framework for business, small and medium-size enterprise development, enterprise management, public enterprise reform and privatization, public/private interaction and conversion of military activities to civilian purposes. Emphasis is also given to development planning issues, such as public investment programming, foreign debt and balance-of-payment issues, development strategy, sectoral planning and activities related to structural adjustment and recovery programmes.

31. To encourage the activities suggested by the experts, Governments and public administration professionals, the programme undertakes research, publications, training programmes and technical cooperation activities. The Development Administration Newsletter is circulated biannually in order to facilitate information-sharing among public administration and finance experts, practitioners and interested scholars. Also, a series of fact sheets entitled Enterprise Development, emanating from the EMPRETEC project, are distributed to share information on entrepreneurship. The programme is also publishing a Directory of Agencies and Institutions in Public Administration and Finance and, since 1974, a periodic listing of Publications on Public Administration and Finance. The publications include titles such as: Human Resources Development in Civil Service Systems: Report of an Interregional Technical Meeting; Implementing Sustainable Development; Methods and Practices of Privatization; Role of the Public Sector in Promoting the Economic Development of Developing Countries; and Guidelines on Performance Contracting for Public Enterprises.

32. Under the mandate to collect and disseminate information on major developments in public administration and finance, a survey on changes and trends in public administration and finance has been administered through the cooperation of the African Association of Public Administration and Management, the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development, the Arab Administrative Development Organization, the Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration for Asia, the Latin American Centre for Development Administration, and the European Group for Public Administration.

33. A study focusing specifically on financial management is being launched and will analyse case-studies that illustrate particular innovations, such as redesign of financial regulations or upgrading of computerized accounting systems. The study aims to identify strategies and approaches that produce long-term financial management benefits and contribute to national capacity.

34. Similarly, at the country level, the programme has carried out a public administration sector study in Bangladesh, the results of which have been published in both English and Bengali. The methodology for this sector study involved international and national consultants, led by programme staff.

35. An essential element of the service provided by the programme to Member States is the series of seminars held during each biennium. For example, in 1994, the seminars and workshops included: (a) a donor working group meeting on aid accountability; (b) small and medium-scale enterprises in developing countries in transition; (c) human resource development; (d) capacity-building for management of development programmes; (e) institution-building in South

Africa (donors' conference); (f) governance and State reform; (g) information systems; (i) electoral issues; and (j) the Pan-African Conference of Ministers of the Civil Service. A sample of 1995 seminars includes: (a) post-privatization policies; (b) women, development and public policy; (c) structural investment policies for a transition to a market economy; (d) management of social development; (e) international cooperation on tax matters; and (f) democratization, decentralization and local government.

36. The programme's technical cooperation involves the provision, upon request by Governments in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, of substantive and managerial support in the formulation and implementation of technical cooperation projects at the national and interregional levels. Such support involves a number of upstream activities such as project development and design, including the identification of needs in public administration and finance, participation in country programming activities and technical support and preparatory assistance in project formulation. It also includes technical assistance in project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

37. Short-term advisory services are provided to Governments of developing countries on specific problems in public administration and finance.

38. For the past 45 years, pursuant to its various legislative mandates, the United Nations programme in public administration and finance has sought to meet the expressed needs of developing countries in improving their administrative and financial management systems for development. Currently, there are 61 active projects in public administration, with 63 others listed as completed. In public finance, there are 52 active projects, with 22 others listed as completed. Of these projects, 59 per cent are in Africa, 17 per cent in Asia, 6 per cent in Latin America, 4 per cent in the Middle East, 2 per cent in Europe and 13 per cent are interregional (rounded figures).

39. Of the upstream (analytical and programme formulation) activities - commonly known as TSS-1 (technical support services, version 1) - public administration has 20 active and 7 completed, with public finance having 2 active and 1 completed. Of the so-called "project support technical services", better known as TSS-2, public administration has eight active and two completed, while public finance has six active and one completed. In the case of TSS-1 and TSS-2 facilities, the programme provides guidance and direction through specialized substantive knowledge, while standard project work utilizes programme expertise in executing and implementing all aspects of project management, namely, procurement, recruitment and finance, each of which is organized in a specialized unit. While the largest proportion of activities fall into the traditional areas of administrative reform, training and financial systems improvement, it is increasingly common to receive requests from the field in emerging areas such as transparency, accountability, judicial and legislative administration, disaster management, electoral administration and result-oriented management based on productivity improvement.

40. While the programme grew steadily during the 1950s, the rate of growth greatly accelerated during the 1960s, when focus shifted away from concern with maintenance-oriented administration towards greater emphasis on development

administration. By the 1970s, Governments were increasingly concerned with building or strengthening national institutions devoted to the improvement of their administrative capability for economic and social development. Attention became focused on developing the cluster of central guidance agencies whose activities could have a major impact on the entire administrative machinery of government and efforts were made to adopt a more interdisciplinary approach to handling administrative issues.

41. During the 1980s, improvement efforts of all types in developing countries were disrupted by economic crises, most notably external debt crises and rising debt burdens, depressed commodity prices, slow growth of output and inadequate mobilization of domestic resources. Many of these countries were called upon to undertake structural adjustment measures, often under the auspices of international financial institutions. New emphasis was placed on public sector management and human resource development to achieve dynamic and sustainable socio-economic development and more assistance was sought to improve management techniques, public policy management and implementation of modern administrative processes.

42. During the 1990s, dramatic political and economic shifts had been occurring throughout the world, marked by increasing tendencies towards democratization, greater reliance on market forces, greater emphasis on mobilizing domestic resources and reducing fiscal deficits, increasing privatization, growing participation of non-governmental and community-based organizations in development processes, and heightened recognition of the need to assure environmentally sound and sustainable development. These newer tendencies imply a changed, albeit no less significant, role for the public sector.

43. The programme notes the demand for assistance to strengthen governance and the capacity to manage reform strategies presently being adopted by a number of countries in response to these world-wide trends. Many of these activities involve greater emphasis on issues such as decentralization, accountability and enhancement of the relationship between government and the private and non-governmental sectors. In the 1990s, programme activity has been increasing in the areas of environmental and electoral administration, as well as in countries that are undergoing urgent crises.

44. For example, the programme currently has activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (public administration, municipal planning), Cambodia (public administration reform), Haiti (public administration and legislative administration), Palestine (community planning) and Rwanda (justice administration, public administration and economic management). Particularly in these cases of urgency, special task forces are operating and streamlined procedures are being developed.

45. Human resource development, as a component of technical cooperation projects and when organized for greatest utilization, has a potentially significant impact on the economic and social life of developing countries. Since the Programme's inception in 1948, it has assisted in the establishment and strengthening of more than 30 national institutes and schools of public administration, as well as a number of regional and interregional institutions devoted to training, research and consultancy.

46. The training activities take many different forms. For example, in-service training of national officials is at the core of all technical cooperation projects. All experts sent to the developing countries are expected to train their counterparts to take over their functions as rapidly as possible. Additionally, in-service training programmes, courses and seminars for government officials in specific functional areas are often carried out during the course of project activities. Fellowships and group training abroad are also linked to capacity-building. A recent review of the training component of public administration and finance projects revealed that, in the past five years, fellowships for external training in public administration and public finance have been granted to 532 participants and that study tour programmes have been arranged for over 700 participants. A survey of in-country training in the area of public administration identified 289 in-service training courses in approximately 90 projects that delivered training to a total of 7,850 participants. Projects in the area of public finance organized over 102 in-service training courses in which more than 2,225 participants received training. In sum, during the past five years, more than 10,000 individuals benefited from the various training programmes organized by the programme.

47. In addition to consultation services provided under the technical cooperation field projects, the programme offers the services of advisers, for short-term consultancies of up to one month in specific technical fields, at no cost to Governments. From 1982 to 1992, advisory services were offered in the following subjects: administrative reform and development (104), management development, training and human resource development (85), information management and computers (36), financial management and financial institutions (24), public enterprises and regulatory administration (41), tax policy and administration (38), government budgeting, accounting and auditing (75), personnel administration (26), electoral administration (12) and aid coordination (5). Since 1994, the programme has begun to provide advisory services in the field of organization development in legislatures and judicial systems.

48. Taking advantage of a recent departmental reorganization, staff from the public administration and finance branches have combined with staff from the economic planning and management branch to formulate a proposal for public sector strategic management reviews that will help governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to map out new strategies and develop an appropriate process of establishing national priorities for development. These reviews are multidisciplinary and multisectoral, and also integrate activities at both the macro- and micro-levels.

49. Developing countries are often affected by special circumstances that result in conditions unfavourable to development. Governments often request strong United Nations intervention to avoid humanitarian crises and to re-establish momentum for development. While these conditions can apply to countries undergoing gradual development and transformation, they are especially characteristic of countries affected by natural disaster or sociopolitical disruptions. The United Nations programme provides advisory services and expert assistance in a wide array of diverse situations, which can be used to fill an immediate need such as assistance in electoral administration for countries seeking to organize or re-establish elections, or priority-setting in emergency

post-conflict rehabilitation of government machinery in the aftermath of armed conflict or civilian upheaval. Equally important can be advice and assistance in stabilizing civil service systems, animating central-local relations and local government, and adjusting appropriate legal, financial and personnel management frameworks. Also, owing to the often overwhelming impact of crises on human life, much effort is given to establishing programmes for human resource development.

50. The programme carries out a wide range of activities in many different countries. Some of the programmes are long-term and some respond to immediate and urgent needs. Several examples illustrate this point. In Burkina Faso, the programme is assisting the Government in long-range public administrative reform, with special linkages to improved governance mechanisms. In Mozambique, the programme assisted the recent election through civic education, legal matters, logistics, social communications and a broadcasting campaign, as well as providing officers to each province to assist Mozambican electoral authorities in organizing and administering a free and fair election. In Viet Nam, the programme is assisting the Government to design and implement a public administration reform programme that is supportive of the economic reforms required in the country's move to a market economy. The reforms involve improvements in four frameworks - legal, personnel, financial and organizational - as well as management improvements in pilot ministries and provinces. In Rwanda, the programme is assisting the Government with restoration of its justice administration, public administration system and economic management capability.

C. Other public administration and development activities within the United Nations system

51. The programme in public administration and finance has a history of maintaining collaboration with other offices in the Secretariat, the specialized agencies and international non-governmental organizations on matters affecting the technical cooperation programme. For example, the programme cooperates with UNDP, the regional commissions, the World Bank, the specialized agencies, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch.

52. A large number of United Nations bodies are involved in the area of international cooperation and development. Many carry out technical assistance in areas of their substantive concerns, yet, in the process of conducting their substantive and technical assistance programmes, they are faced with the challenging issues of capacity-building in public administration when a lack of management capacity hinders their substantive work. Since lack of management capacity is common, substantive agencies can be involved heavily in capacity-building in the sectoral areas of their intervention, for example, health and agriculture.

53. At the present time, because of the resurgence of awareness among some government officials and donor institutions of the importance of an efficient

and lean public bureaucracy to the overall aims of development and a heightened interest in programmes designed to enhance institutional and human resource development, the programme is cooperating with many of the institutions and organizations involved with public sector management.

54. In the field of public sector management reform, therefore, the programme continues to operate in partnership with the World Bank, UNDP and its Management Development and Governance Division and other bilateral and multilateral technical assistance programmes. This area encompasses the interrelated issues of administrative reform, capacity-building, central-local relations and governance, that is, the strategic policy decisions that provide the context for performance improvement in sectors. The revision of legal, financial, economic and personnel management frameworks lays the basis for improved performance in line ministries and in provinces and local governments.

55. Rebuilding institutions requires a dual strategy: (a) system-wide reforms, including the promulgation of laws and the implementation of programmes to overhaul financial and personnel systems and practices as well as interministerial coordination; and (b) specific management improvements, including the delegation of operational decisions, materials management, result-oriented project management, monitoring, evaluation and service delivery assessment. Key ministries can be targets for rapid institution-building, intensive training, information systems, computerization and policy formulation and management capacity.

56. Generally, the key partners involved with the programme in advancing public administration for development are UNDP, the World Bank, the regional commissions and the specialized agencies.

57. In 1988, UNDP established its Management Development Programme, now known as the Management Development and Governance Division, specifically to address strategic issues of capacity-building for national development. Likewise, the World Bank has technical units within its regional bureaux that specialize in public sector management reform, often, along with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), insisting on making certain loans and assistance contingent upon a Government's commitment to various public management improvements. Although the regional commissions develop and implement various programmes that have an impact on public administration, only ECA has a full-fledged programme in public administration reform, complete with research studies, seminars and technical cooperation programmes. Likewise, the various specialized agencies have programmes of technical cooperation that affect public administration, but they are generally limited to sectoral policies and support to central and local units responsible for those policies. The major exception is ILO, which has established a Joint Committee on the Public Service concerned with labour relations, recruitment, career and training policies, social security and the effects of structural adjustment and technological change on the public service. Details on the programmes of these agencies are provided below.

United Nations Development Programme

58. There has been a general shift in the orientation of UNDP activities in the area of management development and governance from 1993 to 1995. Public

management has received approximately 20-22 per cent of the UNDP annual budget and this proportion is expected to be maintained or even increased. In the past most of these resources were used for public sector management activities that were seen as more traditional, such as civil service reform, human resource development, organizational structure, leadership and management. These resources were focused on the executive branch of government.

59. UNDP has a new development paradigm of sustainable human development, which focuses on poverty elimination, environmental protection and regeneration, job creation and the advancement of women. This people-centred approach emphasizes sustainability and gives increased prominence in UNDP to management development and governance, which is the foundation for all of the focus areas. The approach especially supports the UNDP effort to further the elimination of poverty, which was an agreed principle at the World Summit for Social Development. UNDP is currently developing internal policies and strategies on how best to implement this approach to development.

60. The effort to improve public management and to support more effective governance is significantly broader than traditional public administration. It has resulted in the expansion of programmes into the legislative and judicial branches of government and provision of electoral assistance, as well as support for organizations in civil society. Efforts are also devoted to strengthening the capacity of democratic institutions that are essential for sound governance. This does not diminish the importance of the continuing effort to build the capacity of critical public sector organizations.

61. UNDP places particular importance on participation, especially the nexus where civil society interfaces with government. This is paramount in dealing with issues of transparency and accountability. Support for participation is far more than electoral assistance. It includes programmes for devolution of authority and resources to local government and communities. It includes building social capital and the capacity of civil society organizations to interact effectively with the public sector. This requires increased attention to the media, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, professional associations and women's organizations.

62. In addition to the shift towards a broader approach to assistance in the area of management development and governance, UNDP is increasingly using a systemic approach to management development that fully involves nationals through a participatory process consultation methodology, particularly in carrying out national capacity assessments and project formulation. National execution of projects is expanding rapidly and capacity for development and national aid coordination and management is being stressed in many development programmes.

63. For the past seven years the management development programme has been the most obvious example of this direction. Established in 1988, this programme is intended to assist Governments in the area of institutional capacity-building with the purpose of achieving sustainable improvements in the public sector.

64. The strategy is to take a long-term and comprehensive view of public management reform through innovative approaches and comprehensive efforts,

focusing in particular on countries politically committed to change. The key points of activities in this area depend on the priorities agreed by Governments, the needs of recipient countries and the use of national experts to facilitate the change process.

65. As a key agent of public management reform, the management development programme has engaged in a wide range of reform activities in a variety of settings, targeting specifically organization and productivity of the public and parastatal sectors; improving an administration's capacity to formulate and implement long-term reform policies; organization of the civil service; monitoring and evaluating the machinery of government; resource management; and improving training and research institutions in public administration ard business management.

66. Important contributions from the programme have been based on the following inherent features: an emphasis on a comprehensive approach to a country's needs and priorities and strategic focus in programming; a process approach that results in government ownership of a programme or a plan of reform; an emphasis on UNDP support of long-term government of programmes of management improvement in the public sector; and consistent emphasis on decentralization.

67. The achievements of UNDP in the field of public administration can be illustrated by the recent cases of Nepal, Venezuela and Georgia.

68. In Nepal, UNDP was involved in a lengthy and substantial programme of decentralization. Three objectives were established: (a) to increase the capacity of local institutions; (b) to improve the implementation efficiency of government service delivery programmes; and (c) to increase local political involvement in development activities. To achieve these goals several basic policy elements were stressed, among which were the delegation of project planning, resource allocation and project execution to local entities; the retention of various taxing schemes and fees by the local governments; the integration of national-level projects and programmes into relevant district plans; greater participation by user groups in the design and implementation of development activities; and the encouragement of user groups to make use of non-governmental organization assistance and private firms. These polices were implemented by three laws passed by the national Parliament in 1992.

69. In Venezuela, a vast and ambitious programme of state modernization was undertaken. UNDP supported the decentralization aspect of it. The overall aim was to render elected bodies and officials more accountable to civil society and to make government more responsive and receptive to peoples' needs. Its operational objectives were decentralization, professionalizing the managers at certain levels and debureaucratization. Efforts were directed at establishing the balance of competencies between central, state and local authorities. Several valuable lessons were learned to achieve true decentralization: it was necessary to enhance lower-level support; a clear division of labour was needed for tasks to be carried out at the various levels; decentralization can strengthen national integration since it promotes the perception that the State belongs to the people; and the success criteria for decentralization may be measured by the degree of efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of government services.

70. In 1994, UNDP was requested by the Government of Georgia to advise on the institutional reforms needed in connection with the country's achievement of independence and democracy and the development towards a market economy. On the advice of a UNDP consultant, the Government had established the appropriate mechanisms for the management of institutional reforms. Through organizational measures, consultations and training of officials and local experts, change-management capacity is being created. A long-term institutional development programme has been developed by Georgian institutions with facilitation by the UNDP consultant. The programme is also meant as an umbrella for international assistance from various sources, thus facilitating the Government's coordination of aid for the development of the country's institutions in the public sector as well as in civic society.

71. The mission on social security resulted in the creation of a task force for policy management in the field of social security and health. The main outcome of the mission was the creation of a National Council for Public Management, chaired by the Head of State and supported by a Change Management Support Unit, which will oversee capacity-building and day-to-day policy direction.

72. Several general operating principles and processes guide the work of UNDP. Included among these are the programme approach to technical assistance; comprehensiveness; sustainability; innovativeness; capacity-building; and participation and empowerment. UNDP instils these principles in every one of its undertakings.

World Bank

73. The World Bank defines public sector management as the capacity of the State to perform its functions in the service of society - through its people, systems, processes and structures. Improving the capacity of government to perform its functions is a key concern of reorienting government, one of the five strategic development challenges on which the Bank's future work will focus. Some of these specific issues being addressed include organizational structures; systems and processes of government for decision-making, budgeting and financial management, personnel management and appropriate incentive systems; adequate legal and regulatory frameworks; managerial and technical skills; and organizational capacity to learn from and adapt to the changing environment.

74. The Bank interacts with borrower countries in a variety of ways. Particular attention is being paid to policy dialogue; economic and sector work; research; training, notably through the Economic Development Institute; publications such as the World Development Report; and projects.

75. In more than 200 of the 228 projects commenced in fiscal year 1994, there was a public sector management component, such as delegation of responsibility to lower levels of management; administrative decentralization; greater community participation; contracting-out of service provision; strengthening the capacity of the centre to set strategies and related policies at both the macro- and sector levels, mobilize and allocate resources to reflect strategic choices, monitor/learn/adapt, intervene in exceptional circumstances; and strengthening the legislature and judiciary.

76. The broad areas of support included public enterprise reform (46 operations), public financial management (20 operations), civil service reform (13 operations) and institutional development interventions at sectoral or agency levels (157 operations). Institutionalization is defined as the process through which rules, roles and structures are created or altered, leading to sound result-oriented public sector management practices.

77. Recent work has highlighted several points. First, the need to improve transparency and accountability in the management of public resources underlines the importance of developing or being sensitive to constraints and incentives that underpin public choices. Innovations in civil society and the community through such mechanisms as citizen surveys are spreading.

78. Secondly, the various elements of public sector management are closely interlinked, requiring complementary reforms and a more systematic analysis of the institutional framework and more determined efforts to integrate the strategies of institutional development into overall country strategies. Furthermore, institutional development efforts at the sector or agency levels must take into account the impact of the central frameworks of public financial management and civil service management. Although there are some examples of an "enclave" tendency, whereby a function is "fenced off" from the rules of the game applicable to other functions, such special treatment is increasingly to be used only for pilot activities, which should be mainstreamed as soon as possible.

79. Lastly, it is evident that change management is still a relatively neglected area in the design of public sector management reforms. However, the increasing focus on participatory approaches, including the design and/or implementation of public sector management reforms, suggests that the issue has been recognized and is beginning to be addressed.

Economic Commission for Africa

80. The Economic Commission for Africa was established by the Economic and Social Council, by its resolution 671 (XXV) of 25 April 1958, and is a subsidiary body of the Council. The Conference of Ministers responsible for social and economic development is the principal policy-making organ of ECA. Supported by its Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole, it holds its annual session for a duration of 11 days.

81. The ECA work programme focuses specifically on the promotion of subregional and regional policies and strategies to bring about a greater measure of economic cooperation and integration among the African countries, including in particular the production, trade, monetary and financial, infrastructure and institutional fields. The debt problem of the region is also addressed. ECA activities aim at fostering human-centred development through the enhancement of human capacities in both rural and urban areas, and among all productive groups, including women, and at alleviating poverty. ECA pays special attention to the enhancement of mass participation in the development process. Other areas of focus include the strengthening of policy-making and analytical capacity for development management and measures for the effective development of entrepreneurship and private sector initiatives.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

82. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which meets annually, provides overall direction to the work of the secretariat. It reports to the Economic and Social Council. The Commission's subsidiary bodies are the Committee on Regional Economic Cooperation, the Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, the Committee on Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development, the Committee on Statistics, the Committee on Transport and Communications, the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries and the Special Committee on Pacific Island Developing Countries.

83. The Commission's programme of work emphasizes regional economic cooperation and the interdisciplinary nature of economic and social issues through a thematic approach. The activities requiring the most attention are those of data collection, research and analysis for the purpose of providing a more informed understanding of the problems facing the countries in the region. It is in these areas of work that assistance has been most requested by countries with disadvantaged economies and by those with centrally planned economies in the process of transition to a market economy.

84. An effective public administration depends on clear distribution of powers and functions among units and levels of government, rules and regulations, institutional arrangements and a workforce that is skilled and motivated. ESCAP focuses its technical assistance on improved policy design and more effective implementation through skill development. The modalities adopted by ESCAP to achieve these objectives include publications, regional seminars, advisory services and training programmes. In all of these activities, the overall aim is to disseminate information on different approaches to development issues and policies, thereby enabling member States to draw lessons from each other's experiences.

International Labour Organization

85. As a specialized agency, ILO deals with matters concerning employment, conditions of labour, industrial relations and skills training. In all these matters, it interacts with the public administration of each member State that plays a role either as the major provider of jobs or an important force in a tripartite employment structure, which includes government, private employers and employees.

86. Almost all ILO conventions and recommendations in one way or another presuppose public administrative involvement in their implementation. Therefore, member States that ratified particular conventions report regularly to ILO on their enforcement. The Labour Relations (Public Services) Convention, 1978 (N152), and Recommendation, 1978 (N 159), deal directly with employment conditions and industrial relations within the public administration.

87. The major ILO political forum for considering aspects of public administration is the Joint Committee on the Public Service. The fifth session of the Committee was held in 1994. The topics covered at previous sessions of the Committee, such as labour relations, recruitment career and training

policies, social security, the effects of structural and technological change, formed part of the ILO record in defending democratic values in the public service. At its most recent session, the Committee considered specifically the issue of part-time work within the public service and adopted resolutions on trade union rights and the situation of women in the public service.

88. The Committee also adopted a resolution concerning future ILO activities in the public service and decided that at its next session it should consider the impact of privatization and contracting out on the public service workforce.

89. An important meeting on the impact of structural adjustment in the public services was held in May 1995 at Geneva. The deliberations and conclusions of the meeting could be considered a practical contribution by ILO to the preparation for the resumed session of the General Assembly on public administration and development.

90. Besides regulatory activities and consideration of general labour-related issues in the civil services of member States, ILO looks continuously into economic sectors that are associated wholly, predominantly or partly with the public sector, such as education and training, health, public utilities, post and communication, transport, inland waterways, media and culture.

91. In April 1995 the ILO Governing Body approved a list of sectoral meetings for 1996-1997 that includes a number of meetings on public-service concerns, namely: (a) public sector reform in the context of structural adjustment and transition; (b) privatization of public utilities: managing transition; (c) the human resource dimension of structural and regulatory changes and globalization in postal and telecommunication services; and (d) improving equality of opportunity for women in the education profession: an ILO plan of action.

92. In addition to its regulatory efforts aimed at improving working conditions within the public services of member States, ILO does its best to raise efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector. Various ILO technical programmes have been involved continuously in national capacity-building for competence-based vocational training and retraining of redundant workers; productivity improvement in public services; government stimulation of employment through labour policies, public works, small enterprises, development and self-employment; and improvement of structure and performance of labour ministries and employment services.

93. An ILO technical assistance package for the countries emerging from conflict is currently being developed. The package is designed to help Governments to deal with economic and social rehabilitation of displaced persons through training and job creation.

94. The creation of multidisciplinary teams in the field has enabled ILO to decentralize technical cooperation activities and to establish closer relations with its tripartite constituency in the member States. This policy of active partnership promotes better dialogue with Governments on improvement of the performance standards and working conditions of public employees.

95. ILO is pleased to participate in the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General to the resumed session of the General Assembly. Besides conducting the special meeting on the impact of structural adjustment in the public services referred to above, its representative works in the inter-agency technical committee for the resumed session. ILO documents and publications have been submitted as background papers for the report.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

96. The services of UNIDO with respect to industrial policies support the creation of market-based competitive economic systems. The services feature advice and assistance to adjust the role of Governments to ensuring adequate competition, promoting new investment, achieving quality standards, meeting environmental and social requirements and enabling more active participation of the private sector in the industrialization process, including policy formulation and institutional support. UNIDO advises Governments on industrial strategies and policies; it assists in the restructuring and strengthening of ministries of industries and related authorities; and it establishes information systems and organizes seminars on the respective roles of Governments, institutions and private industry. UNIDO also undertakes policy analyses, reviews, projections and scenario analyses, and, on the basis of resource surveys, recommends resource management programmes. High priority is given to industrial development plans and programmes for less developed or disadvantaged regions and for decentralization of industry. UNIDO also advises on the creation of governmental bodies for regional development.

97. Services in support of private sector development are targeted on the needs of both governments and industry. UNIDO directly assists in the establishment of industrial estates, technology parks and export processing zones. Assistance strengthens chambers of commerce and industry, manufacturers' associations and other non-governmental organizations in the services they render to industry. UNIDO helps set up mechanisms for consultations between institutions and the Government, and for cooperation between industry and research, scientific and educational institutions. UNIDO can also develop or strengthen the capacity of consulting firms and non-profit institutions to render industry-related services.

98. Of UNIDO's 104 ongoing and pipeline projects in private sector development, 45 per cent of the number and 60 per cent of the value have been developed in Africa. At the level of the firm, UNIDO provides assistance to implement and monitor the impact of total quality management. Capacity-building for industrial associations and enterprises was provided to assess continuous quality improvements and production increases in 10 Latin American countries.

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99. It is useful to note the close cooperation between the programme and the various other specialized agencies, for example, WHO, which assists ministries of health in developing countries. In Cambodia, the programme has assisted the Government with the design and implementation of its public administration reform programme, in conjunction with WHO and other United Nations bodies

working in the sectoral ministries. There is a concerted attempt to link innovative government-wide frameworks in finance, personnel, planning and information management, with innovative activities within the sectoral ministries. It is interesting to note that some innovations are centre-led, that is, designed by central guidance agencies to apply to the whole government, while some innovations are sector-led in the sense that an innovation successfully developed in one sectoral ministry is then applied to the whole Government. The Cambodian example illustrates the combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches, the linkage between system-wide reforms and innovative experiments in improved management in line ministries, and the recognition that effective innovations can arise in all corners of the Government. This example leads to the conclusion that there needs to be continuous monitoring and identification of issues and innovations throughout Governments, as well as opportunities to share these experiences among Governments.

100. From the above experiences it can be concluded that public management needs are at the forefront of United Nations system concerns at both the sectoral and cross-sectoral national policy levels. These experiences also demonstrate an increasing global concern for efficient public administration for development. This will be discussed in detail in the next section. Finally, the need for a coordinated system so as to efficiently provide assistance in public administration to the Member States is also clear.

III. CONTEXT AND DYNAMICS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

101. Historically, the United Nations programme in public administration and finance has played a leading role in facilitating exchanges of ideas, experiences and innovations among Member States in the field of public administration and development. The future role of the United Nations in this field will be determined by a number of conditions and more importantly by a strategic vision. The Agenda for Development (A/48/935) and the Agenda for Peace (A/47/277-S/24111) are two primary documents that contribute to a strategic vision. The world conferences of the 1990s provide additional strategic guidance and direction to programme activities, particularly in sectoral and multisectoral fields. Also important in determining the vision and more importantly the programmatic goals and objectives of the United Nations are the recommendations made by the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance at its twelfth meeting. In strengthening the role of public administration and development, consideration must be given to the following: (a) the role of public administration in enabling the conditions of development; (b) the role of public administration in planning and implementing the recommendations of the world conferences; and (c) incorporating recommendations of the Group of Experts on the role of public administration and the capacity-building process.

A. Enabling conditions for development

102. The report of the Secretary-General entitled "An agenda for development" (A/48/935) articulates five enabling conditions for development, namely, peace as a foundation; the economy as an engine of progress; the environment as a basis for sustainability; justice as a pillar of society; and democracy as good governance.

103. A fundamental prerequisite of development is peace. However, past development efforts in many countries rarely took place under this condition. In most cases tension, strife, conflict and confrontations defined the reality within which development took place. Such conditions are not conducive to development and often negate development breakthroughs.

104. Building and developing mechanisms of governance and public administration is one of the primary issues facing many countries coming out of war or civil strife or undergoing transition to democracy. Government capacity to regulate the economy, stimulate growth, provide basic social services, maintain the rule of law and deliver goods and services are severely strained or in extreme cases non-existent. Key institutions of civil society may need to be created in many instances and in other cases reinforced. Governmental activities in such diverse fields as a fair system for generating public revenue, a legislative basis for the protection of human rights, and rules for the operation of private enterprise all require immediate plans and programmes of action. Very few Governments have the ability to carry out the peace-building development process on their own. Besides requiring material resources, Governments will require trained personnel and technical expertise, shared experiences of countries in similar situations and support in the rapid development of governance and public administration capability. The relevant United Nations agency programmes are uniquely positioned to provide such support because of their world-wide involvement in support of such activities. Continued cooperation and joint projects with the Department of Peace-keeping Operations can only enhance the ability of the programme to support national governmental efforts in peace and development.

105. Economic growth is the engine of development as a whole. Without economic growth, there cannot be a sustainable increase in household or government consumption, in private or public capital formation, or in health, welfare and security levels. By whatever social processes distributional choices are made, the capacity to make them is severely limited in poor societies and is enhanced by economic growth. A supportive national environment and a favourable international climate are necessary conditions for achieving economic growth, and a supportive national environment must be based on pragmatic policies in which Governments can no longer be assumed to be paramount economic agents.

106. While Governments, in the new context of the growing importance of the market and the private sector, have a diminished productive role in economic development, it is important to note that all Governments will retain responsibility for providing a regulatory framework for the effective operation of a competitive market system. Governments have to intervene where appropriate to invest in infrastructure, to facilitate the development of productive sectors, to provide an enabling environment for the promotion of the private

sector, to ensure proper social safety nets are in place, to invest in human capital and to protect the environment. Governments provide the framework within which individuals can plan their long-term prospects. In recent years Governments have sought assistance in detaching themselves from their production activities, transferring current activities into the private sector, rightsizing themselves, retraining their professionals in contract management and regulation management, and developing facilitative managers rather than productive managers. They will continue to do so. In all these activities they will need to redirect and strengthen their own administrative systems. Without effective, efficient and responsive public administration systems, Governments may not be able to bring about necessary changes in support of economic growth. While some Governments can rely mostly on themselves, others may remain heavily dependent on technical assistance and information on the experiences of other nations in fine-tuning the relationship between government, society and the private sector. For Member States, the relevant United Nations agencies, including the United Nations programme in public administration and finance, remain the core institutions for assisting such a change and transformation process.

107. The importance of sound, well-managed and effective use of the Earth's natural resources cannot be overemphasized. As environmental degradation affects the quality and even the quantity of all human life, environmental protection provides a basic building block for all forms of human resource development. Development and environment are intertwined and one cannot be addressed without reference to the other.

108. As more Governments realize the importance of a sustainable environment as critical to human development and focus on past improprieties and lack of consideration, they will need assistance in articulating and integrating environment policy with other development policies. As this concern for the environment is a fairly new one and is fast becoming a major component of an already full national government plate of activities, Governments will turn towards international organizations for assistance in improving their policy process, developing appropriate management functions and structures, and improving their human resource capacity in this area. The United Nations programme in public administration and finance in cooperation with its other United Nations partner programmes can continue to assist Member States to build the management capacity of national Governments.

109. Current social conditions in many countries call for an active and vigorous programme of administration to deal with many complex and urgent social problems. People are a country's principal asset and their well-being unequivocally defines development. Their energy and initiative drive development, and their characteristics determine the nature and direction of sustainable human development. The benefits of investing in people, however, go beyond increasing the productivity of labour and facilitating access to global opportunities. A healthy, well-educated citizenry contributes to the social cohesion of a country and imparts a dynamism to all aspects of life and culture.

110. Existing social conditions are the starting-point for development and determine the priorities and direction of a country's public administration/management development system. Poverty and disease, urgent need for education and sustainable livelihood, sudden economic hardship, decaying

industries and similar urgent problems require government responses. Governments will also be involved in the creation of conditions that will provide wide and equitable access to assets and opportunities. Governments will need effective, efficient and responsive social administration systems. Civil servants need to have appropriate mechanisms and capacity to manage social programmes. Current assessment of most developing and transitional economies demonstrates that national Governments may need international support and cooperation in improving their public administration systems and training their personnel for initiating and implementing dynamic social programmes.

111. Improving and enhancing governance is a sine qua non for the success of any agenda or strategy for development. The quality of governance may be the single most important development variable within the control of individual States. While democracy is not the only means by which improved governance can be achieved, it is the only reliable one. By providing for greater popular participation, democracy increases the likelihood that national development goals will reflect broad societal aspirations and priorities. By providing appropriate mechanisms and channels for governmental succession, democracy provides incentives to protect the capacity, reliability and integrity of core state institutions, including the civil service, the legal system and the democratic process itself. By establishing the political legitimacy of Governments, democracy strengthens their capacity to carry out their policies and functions efficiently and effectively. By making Governments accountable to citizens, democracy makes them more responsive to popular concerns and provides added incentives for transparency in decision-making.

112. In the context of development, improved governance has several implications. In particular, however, it facilitates the design and pursuit of a comprehensive national strategy for development. It ensures the capacity, reliability and integrity of the core institutions of the modern State. It means improving the ability of government to carry out governmental policies and functions, including the management of implementation systems. It means accountability for actions and transparency in decision-making and it mea.. the opportunity for people to participate openly in the democratic process. Improved governance will require an effective, efficient and responsive public administration system.

B. World conferences of the 1990s

113. During the first half of the 1990s, five world conferences were held: the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 and the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. Each conference made major recommendations, which will have an impact on the ways in which national Governments will function, and point to the need for an effective and efficient public administration system in planning and implementing those recommendations and for the support and cooperation of relevant United Nations and other international and regional institutions in assisting Governments to improve their public administration systems. Each conference is briefly reviewed, in particular its recommendations requiring governmental action, followed by brief

reference to the relevant public administration systems and implementation of recommendations.

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

114. Through its Agenda 21 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992, provided the most complex set of recommendations for national Governments and the United Nations to turn the world from its self-consumptive course to one of renewal and sustenance. There is a heightened awareness of the need for compelling action towards this eco-revolution. In calling for action, the Conference made recommendations in 40 sub-areas, which were then grouped into four broad topics: social and economic dimensions of sustainable environment; conservation and management of resources for development; strengthening the role of major groups; and means of implementation. For present purposes, it is critical to take note of the management and capacity-building component of each of the 40 sub-areas. As an example of how public administration can be involved in the management and capacity-building of all 40 sub-areas, one area is highlighted (chap. 32), which focuses on strengthening the role of farmers. In most Member States agriculture occupies a central activity, one in which development activities are prevalent. The Conference called upon Governments (a) to create institutional and legal mechanisms to ensure effective land tenure for farmers; (b) to strengthen rural institutions that would enhance stability through locally managed credit systems and technical assistance; and (c) to establish mechanisms to increase access of farmers, particularly women and farmers from indigenous groups, to agricultural training. An effective public administrative system will be needed to assist Governments to complement these activities and implement similar recommendations in other sub-areas.

World Conference on Human Rights

115. In seeking a common standard of achievement for all people and all countries in the area of human rights, the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, called upon all nations, regions and the international community to create favourable conditions for and effective enjoyment of basic human rights. It recommended that States eliminate all violations of human rights and the alleviation and eventual elimination of conditions such as extreme poverty, obstacles for development and lack of freedoms, which limit human rights. Governments were urged not only to implement existing mandates that ensure human rights, but also actively to create conditions that protect and promote human rights. As Governments become increasingly involved in enhancing human rights, they will require, among other things, an effective, efficient and responsive public administration system. To achieve that, many Governments may call upon the United Nations system to provide technical assistance in human rights issues and share experiences of countries that have enhanced human rights.

International Conference on Population and Development

116. At the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994, it was affirmed that national, regional and international population policies must be implemented, encouraged and supported.

States must be supported in their efforts to control population increases. The international community's approach to population problems must be subject to a constant and broad debate that mobilized all Member States at the highest level. The Programme of Action adopted contained highly specific goals that will require the will, commitment and capacity of strong public administrations.

117. The Conference called for drawing women into the mainstream of development by being provided better health services and education, and through freedom to plan the future of their families. It called upon States not only to process the action plans but to undertake a vigorous pursuit of the Programme of Action. It will be a real challenge for public administrators to implement the specifics of the programme. For example, population and family planning policies have to be reassessed and refocused, and issues of public health and education have to be redirected. Above all, excellence in managerial capabilities and institutional and organizational structures have to be instituted in order for States to pursue the programmes of action. United Nations bodies, including the United Nations programme in public administration and finance, will continue to play a vital role in assisting States in building their capacity for delivering public health and welfare goods and services.

World Summit for Social Development

118. The Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995, require public administrators of developing countries and transition economies to respond to the challenges of sustainable social development. This will require first and foremost efficient and effective public sector management. Central public administration concerns of government structure and process, personnel and budgeting must be balanced by a cross-sectoral development agenda of poverty alleviation, government/civil society interactions, community participation and managerial capacity-building in Governments. The United Nations agencies must take on the substantive challenges of the Summit and match them with equally forceful efforts in supporting capacity-building in public administration. Following the Summit an International Conference on Public Administration and Social Development was held in October 1995, which further elucidated the role of public administration in social development. That Conference called for integrated technical support and cooperation from United Nations bodies, including the programme in public administration and finance, in assisting Governments in upgrading institutional and managerial capabilities for implementing the Programme of Action recommended by the Summit.

119. Upgrading of institutional and managerial capabilities in reaching those in extreme poverty, monitoring performance, and building social networks of public sector and beneficiary communities are some of the areas for capacity-building. The United Nations programme is the central unit with the technical capability to support programme activities in those areas.

Fourth World Conference on Women

120. The Beijing Declaration, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995, considered essential the design, implementation and monitoring, with the full participation of women, of

effective, efficient and mutually reinforcing gender-sensitive policies and programmes, including development policies and programmes, at all levels that will foster the empowerment and advancement of women. It also noted the important participation and contribution of all actors of civil society, in particular women's groups and networks and other non-governmental and community-based organizations, with full respect for their autonomy, in cooperation with Governments, to the effective implementation of and follow-up to the Platform for Action.

121. The Platform for Action notes that Governments have the primary responsibility for implementation. It notes the need for Governments to establish or improve the effectiveness of national administrative machinery for the advancement of women at the highest political level, appropriate intra- and inter-ministerial procedures and staff, and other institutions with the mandate and capacity to broaden women's participation and integrate gender concerns into policies and programmes.

122. Effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action will require changes in values, behaviours, rules and procedures in the internal dynamics of public institutions and organizations, including key aspects of public administration such as human resource development, appropriate institutional and organizational development, and relevant administration reform.

Key theme of the five conferences

123. All five world conferences require States to take on a very active role in implementation of the individual programmes of action. It is important to note that the two principal anchors for the United Nations are the pursuit of (a) peace and international security and (b) economic and social development. It is in our collective interest to promote peace, social progress and a better standard of life. These sentiments are expressed in the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations. As long as these remain our stated vision and as long as we need to provide States with operational support in these areas, public administration capacity-building will be a critical component of United Nations programme support activity. It will, therefore, not only require relevant United Nations bodies, including the United Nations programme in public administration and finance, to maintain their current level of services, but may also mean they are called upon to provide increased services in the very near future.

C. The role of public administration in development

124. The Group of Experts at its twelfth meeting considered public administration and development inseparable. Public administration was viewed as government in action, and development as the object or purpose of all government action, whether direct or indirect. Although societies ask their Governments to perform different functions, certain core functions are invariable.

125. The Experts defined these core functions of Governments as (a) promoting an enabling environment for development; (b) in the absence of a sufficient driving

force from other social institutions, through their leadership role and for periods of time, working as the engine of development; (c) playing a major role in building development capacity; and (d) undertaking to remedy the development deficiencies and failings of other social institutions.

126. In further elaboration of the importance of understanding the role of public administration in development, the Experts analysed the following: factors affecting global development strategies; how the changed global context is affecting all countries; the primary challenge of redefining the role of the State; public administration leadership, and the thinking part of government (see A/50/525-E/1995/122, annex, paras. 18-26).

127. The Group of Experts stressed that government decisions are crucial in determining the future of societies, with important implications for the minutiae of implementation of development programmes. Where there seems to be indecision and chaos, there may be a deficiency in the "thinking" part of government. Governments, at all levels from the international arena to local bodies, seems to be drifting. This condition may be due in large part to the neglect of long-term strategic thinking. With a focus on short-term values, there is little attention to investment in structural or institutional capacity-building. Likewise, there is little emphasis on strategic planning at the national level or on its institutionalization. Various management techniques are available to Governments which seek to recapture their capability for high-level thinking. Governments can (a) build scenarios towards a more desirable future, (b) develop policies that adapt to people's needs and future resources, and (c) assess risk and probability associated with future events.

128. This thinking part of government needs to attract staff who are creative and original. A nucleus of talented persons needs to be attracted to the core functions of government in order to provide wise counsel for the steering of the government.

129. The Experts specifically elaborated on the role of public administration in development, in the context of several specific uses. The roles for public administration are (a) sustaining economic growth; (b) promoting social development; (c) facilitating infrastructure development and protecting the environment; (d) promoting partnerships; (e) managing development programmes; and (f) establishing the legal and regulatory framework (see A/50/525-E/1995/122, annex, paras. 28-84).

D. Capacity-building in public administration

130. In assessing the importance of capacity-building to conduct the core functions of Governments, the Group of Experts at its twelfth meeting once again gave considerable weight to global trends affecting the capacity-building process, and also examined issues of responsibilities of the public administration system, better performance, importance of people in administration, management tools and technologies (see A/50/525-E/1995/122, annex, paras. 85-97).

IV. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A. Challenges facing the United Nations and recommendations for action

131. The General Assembly asked to be informed of the role the United Nations played in the field of public administration and development and how that role could be strengthened. The previous sections describe how the role is being performed. The present section consolidates the recommendations of the Group of Experts and identifies the challenges currently facing both the United Nations and the international community. Recognizing the complexity of these challenges, the Group of Experts recommended that a plan of action for strengthening the United Nations role in this area be developed. Elements to be included in such a plan of action are offered below in the form of the recommendations to the United Nations and to national Governments so that Member States will be able to review them at the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly, and to take appropriate action.

132. While considering the challenges faced by the United Nations in public administration and development and the themes of public administration improvement in the 1990s, it is recognized that the role, state and operation of public administration is tied to the unique socio-economic and political complexion of each country. Hence the primary responsibility for reforming or improving public administrations rests with national Governments. While recognizing this diversity and uniqueness of public administration conditions, the Group of Experts raised three considerations: (a) what are the main ingredients that will define the role of future public administration; (b) where will critical capacity-building have to take place in public administration systems; and (c) what will be the role of the United Nations. The review of these considerations indicates that while country situations result in distinct projects and priorities for public administration, at least three trends are affecting public administration in virtually all countries, developed, developing and economies in transition. These three trends are:

(a) Rapidly changing domestic and international conditions and increasing demands for services. These will require innovative policies at the strategic level and improved service delivery systems at the operational level. Innovativeness defined by creativity and flexibility to respond to rapid change will be a "core requirement" for development administration and governance;

(b) Continuing response of public administration to core responsibilities. Public administration will continue to fulfil critical functions in development, supporting measures for economic growth, protecting the environment, determining the relationship between the public and the private sector, reducing poverty and illiteracy and other social development activities, thereby achieving the goals of sustainable development. Therefore, exceptional capacities to govern for development are essential for public administration;

(c) Greater demand for participation and transparency. To fulfil critical future-shaping functions, public administration needs to establish a dynamic people-oriented system through strategic restructuring for transparency nd

participation, as well as outstanding professionalism by attracting bright, energetic, visionary people into public administration. For public administration to be the centre of administrative and management excellence, Governments will invest in radical shifts in service conditions, career patterns and the spirit of the public service.

133. These common trends and challenges facing the community of nations in public administration and development are complex and resolutions are therefore neither straightforward nor easy to implement. Likewise, no resolution is able to address all aspects of these complex issues. This realization leads to the conclusion that public administration must approach development with directness, pragmatism, openness and flexibility. Programmes are most likely to be successful when they involve all stakeholders in a transparent dialogue, with mutually agreed strategies and organizational commitments to success. That process is time-consuming, expensive and delicate, but such a deliberative process is the only hope for genuine development, which in turn depends upon talented, skilled and sensitive public administrators for implementation.

134. Since the founding of the public administration and finance programme, the United Nations has worked to meet the needs of its Member States and their requests. Over the years, the United Nations technical cooperation programme has assisted all developing countries with projects and programmes dealing with every aspect of social and economic life. Thousands of discrete activities, small and medium-size projects, upstream and midstream studies, and formulation and evaluation, have been organized or are in the pipeline. At the base is assistance to the public administrations, which are the basis not only for improved sectoral programmes but also for more effective and efficient governance. Is the United Nations confident that it has done all that it could have done to promote development? How can it be more certain that its efforts lead to results? These questions raise three fundamental challenges that the United Nations faces:

(a) How to revitalize United Nations operations in public administration and development to contribute to capacity-building for Governments of Member States, resulting in the wide distribution of peace and prosperity?

(b) How can the United Nations be certain that its programme for public administration is effective, innovative, sensitive and economically viable?

(c) How best can the United Nations programme in public administration attain greater programmatic achievement?

135. For both the United Nations and the Member States there are several formidable tasks ahead that require a sustained commitment to excellence. Tasks like facilitating public administration by effectively and creatively utilizing human resources; building government processes and institutions to provide a peaceful resolution of conflict; the need to shift non-core functions of government to the private sector; to maintain the vitality of technical cooperation while changing the mechanisms of delivery to incorporate additional technological advances; and to perform those tasks successfully while balancing severe resource constraints.

136. Given the extent of the emerging issues and the scope of responsibility facing the community of nations, the General Assembly at its forthcoming session is charged with providing ways and means for countries to address such issues equitably and innovatively. For the United Nations and Member States there exists a common set of challenges in several critical areas; these are set out below, followed by institutional recommendations of the Secretary-General that will define the role of the United Nations and contemporary public administration into the twenty-first century.

137. Practical recommendations to deal with such compelling challenges have been developed by taking into consideration the report of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance on its twelfth meeting (A/50/525-E/1995/122, annex). Recommendations presented for the United Nations are at both a strategic and a macro level, and are intended to improve the management of public administration issues within the entire United Nations system. In offering these recommendations, consideration has been given to the contextual changes taking place at the global level, including the need to remove duplications and do more with less, and the continued calls for assistance by Member States - developing countries, transitional economy countries, and countries where public administration systems are to be restored. In addition, significant importance has been attached to redefining the focus and content of the United Nations programme in public administration and finance. The recommendations have strategic implications for improving the functioning of the public administration activities within the United Nations system. For greatest effectiveness, these recommendations are to be implemented swiftly and comprehensively.

1. Role of policy-making for public administration and development

Challenge 1

138. To ensure that public administration and development activities attain greater visibility; the challenge is how to sustain debate, of both an economic and a social nature, on the part of the United Nations; how to identify effectively and respond innovatively to emerging issues, and to provide a stable platform for follow-up and implementation of the recommendations generated by the General Assembly at its resumed session.

Recommendations

139. In view of the overall importance of the role of the United Nations in the field of public administration and development, it is recommended that the issue be included as a regular item in the agenda of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. As indicated in General Assembly resolution 49/136, the issue of public administration and development should receive appropriate review by the Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council. To reinforce the intention of the resumed session, and to affirm that public management and governance issues attain greater visibility by being securely situated in the debate of the United Nations legislative bodies, it is

recommended that the General Assembly consider keeping the item continuously on its agenda, to be reviewed every two years.

140. It is recommended that the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance be designated the Committee on Public Administration and Development. The Group of Experts is already a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. It is recommended that the Committee on Public Administration and Development report to the Council, the members being experts in public administration and finance nominated by their Governments and elected by the Council. This representative expert body will provide a more stable platform for follow-up and implementation of the recommendations of the General Assembly at its resumed session and the public administration implications of the various world conferences. Given the current budget provision for the meeting of the Group of Experts, this change will not have any financial implications, as long as the proposed Committee meets only once every two years, as the Group of Experts has done. In this context the United Nations programme in public administration and finance should be renamed the United Nations programme in public administration and development. This proposal is consistent with recommendations made by the Group of Experts at its twelfth meeting (A/50/525-E/1995/122, appendix I, sect. II.I, para. 4).

2. Focus of the United Nations programme in public administration and development

Challenge 2.A

141. The United Nations now plays a proactive role in assisting Governments in improving public management and finance systems by generating and disseminating information and customizing the best and most appropriate practices. The challenge, therefore, is to enhance the Organization's role as a clearing-house for information and services and its position as a global centre of excellence for public administration and development.

Recommendations

142. It is recommended that the revitalization of the clearing-house function of the United Nations programme be given highest priority. The United Nations programme in public administration and development should enhance its role as the central depository for materials, reports and non-print media on public administration and development world wide, including active research into best practices. The United Nations programme, utilizing the latest technology, should become the clearing-house for all materials on the subject, with a user-friendly interface for suppliers and users of information, linkages with relevant networks, and a strong service orientation to function as a catalyst for a network of international, regional and national institutions and organizations involved in these issues. The need for a comprehensive clearing-house is especially urgent in the 1990s as more and more countries are reforming their governance and public management systems. Those Governments need information both on the content of reforms and on the process of reform, including how such reforms were planned and implemented successfully in comparable countries. A roster of "turnaround managers" who have made

significant improvement in public management systems and who can be made available to assist countries that request their services will be established. The organization and updating of systematized information globally on governance and public management reform will be extremely useful for countries, especially those at the early and middle stage of socio-economic development. Currently, this clearing-house function is being performed in a limited way by the United Nations programme. It needs to be assigned high priority and the existing budgetary resources need to be rearranged to reflect this priority and function.

143. It is recommended that the focus of the United Nations programme be directed to action-oriented and practical research on effective systems and procedures in public administration. Related specifically to the exchange of information is the need for practical research and analysis of governance and public management systems that work effectively, especially in the newly developed economies, and the systemization of findings of that research that could be used for countries seeking to reform their public management and governance systems. Such research on effective systems and practices is being done by the United Nations programme and other agencies in several subjects, including civil service systems, administrative restructuring, decentralization, aid management and accountability, metropolitan governance, training and professional development, and rehabilitation and reconstruction of post-conflict administration systems. As an increasing number of Governments are interested in learning more about the appropriateness and applicability of effective systems and practices in their diverse and complex environments, there is an increasing need to both expand and deepen these practical research activities. It is recommended that the United Nations programme rearrange its priorities so as to devote more attention to the study and dissemination of effective systems and practices in the area of governance and public management.

144. The Division of Public Administration and Development Management of the Department for Development Support and Management Services, which is entrusted with the responsibility of implementing the United Nations programme in public administration and finance, will continue to maximize and optimize the use of its existing resources. It is thus expected that by improving its efficiency, technical capacity and responsiveness, the Division will be able to meet the new requirements of the revitalized programme.

Challenge 2.B

145. One of the most important roles of the United Nations is to assist individual Member States, upon request, in improving their administrative systems so as to accelerate and, in some cases, repair the government machinery after conflict. To provide for extension services, the challenge for the programmes is to maximize capacity to provide advisory services to Governments and to carry out needs assessment and programme formulation missions.

Recommendations

146. It is recommended that the United Nations programme and other relevant United Nations bodies identify technical missions, at the request of Governments, to assist in the systematic diagnosis of public management systems or any aspect of them, in the development and customization of appropriate

improvement programmes and in the technical review of improvement programmes. Tied to the function of clearing-house and research on effective systems and practices is the most important role of the United Nations in assisting, at their request, individual Governments in improving and reforming their governmental machinery and public management systems for development. To maximize its effectiveness in this area, the United Nations programme should be strengthened in the areas of advisory services, needs assessment, diagnostics and substantive support to projects. At its twelfth meeting, the Group of Experts identified several high-priority areas, such as advice in policy formulation and implementation strategies, administrative restructuring for economic reform, people-oriented development, strategic fiscal and financial management, and strengthening of training in, for example, evaluation and management of change, in which Member States may seek technical help from United Nations agencies. The issues and areas of governance and public management in which Member States may seek technical assistance are complex and diverse and, in responding, United Nations agencies need to cooperate among themselves and develop some identity or specialization to focus their substantive capacity and to offer optimal advisory services to Governments. Such cooperation needs to cover other bilateral, technical and professional institutions at the interregional and regional levels to make technical assistance beneficial for countries that need and request it.

147. It is recommended that the United Nations programme and other United Nations bodies assist Governments, at their request, in translating the goals and recommendations of global conferences into detailed programmes of implementation. It is suggested that the proposed Committee on Public Administration and Development should review the administrative aspects of the implementation of the recommendations of the world conferences, in order to ensure full consideration of public management issues.

148. It is recommended that the United Nations, including the programme, should assist Governments in establishing institutions and in creating the conditions which will facilitate the development of a healthy private sector. Capacity should be maintained and enhanced to collect information and to assist Governments in establishing an appropriate regulatory framework for economic activity in evaluating modalities for privatization and in the conversion of military industries for civilian production.

149. It is recommended that the United Nations programme attach high priority in assisting Governments, at their request, in the development and updating of high-level technical or analytical skills within the pubic service to meet the new challenges posed by globalization of the economies, technological advances, and the growing importance of the civil society. The nature and scope of United Nations assistance may include identification and amelioration of skills at various levels, appropriate ways of developing or updating those skills, preparation of training modules or programmes, cooperating with academic and training institutions at all levels and recommending an appropriate structure, in addition to the effective utilization and retention of those skills within the public service.

150. It is recommended that the United Nations programme play a pivotal role in assisting in all phases of the restoration and restructuring of public

administration institutions in countries recovering from conflict and crises. It should strengthen its professional expertise and other capabilities to assess needs, design action plans, mobilize resources and assist in implementation. The United Nations, in particular the programme, should develop the concepts and capabilities for preventative management of potentially unstable situations.

151. It is recommended that the United Nations programme actively assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition to exchange their experiences in public administration and finance on the basis of South-South cooperation for development. In order to strengthen institutional capacity-building and human resource development in the public sector, developing countries and countries with economies in transition should avail themselves of the mechanisms of technical cooperation among developing countries and of triangular cooperation, in which developed countries and international organizations should play a catalytic role.

3. Coordination of public administration and development activities within the United Nations system

Challenge 3

152. In view of the strong connection between public administration, finance issues and sectoral development issues, the challenge facing the United Nations as a whole is to improve coordination so as to be more responsive to emerging public management issues related to sustainable development.

Recommendation

153. A consultative group on public administration and development will meet regularly under the auspices of the Department for Development Support and Management Services. To strengthen effective collaboration and coordination among various programmes in governance and public management currently carried out by various United Nations agencies, including Bretton-Woods institutions such as the World Bank and IMF, it is recommended that the consultative group include representation from all relevant United Nations agencies, regional commissions and the World Bank. The group will also be open to other interregional and regional governmental organizations and appropriate international or regional professional and research institutions. The consultative group will meet once a year, and will focus on closer collaboration in the planning and implementation of global programmes of information exchange, research on effective systems and practices, preparation of guidelines and organization of seminars and workshops. It will also provide a forum for mobilization and collaboration in international assistance in promoting sustained reform in governance and public management in specific countries and at regional and international levels. As the meetings of the proposed consultative group would be conducted in English and would not require language services, and since it would function exclusively within existing departmental budgetary provisions, the formulation of such a group would have no financial implications.

4. Support of donors for public administration and development

Challenge 4

154. As recognized by the General Assembly in resolution 49/136 and the Group of Experts at its twelfth meeting, improvement in administrative systems is a constant challenge, not only for the United Nations programme but also for the donor community, and is a sine qua non for sustaining development.

Recommendation

155. It is recommended that the donor community recognize the role and significance of public administration in development and provide adequate resources in their programmes of assistance for improving public administration in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. While the main efforts for administrative improvement must be initiated and sustained at the national level, it needs to be recognized that technical cooperation with international and regional institutions, including regional United Nations agencies, will be vital in assisting and supporting the process of improvement. The donor community is urged to support the relevant interregional and regional institutions, including relevant United Nations agencies, so that those institutions can perform effectively their technical and supporting role in reforming and improving public administration for development in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

156. The donor community should favourably consider additional voluntary resources for the strengthening of the functions of the United Nations programme. Particular consideration should be given to the loan of expertise to carry out practical research and advisory missions. To this end the Secretary-General will establish a trust fund for United Nations activities in public administration and development.

B. Recommendations for national Governments and United Nations responses

157. While making recommendations for strengthening the United Nations system in the area of public administration and development, the Secretary-General wishes to draw attention to some key recommendations made by the Group of Experts addressed to national Governments, and how the United Nations responses can offer assistance.

158. The Group of Experts recognized that governance and public management systems have a uniqueness and diversity among countries, and the primary responsibility for improving or reforming governance and public management systems rests with national Governments. Accordingly, the Experts made several recommendations based on a comparative review of national experiences, for consideration by Governments. In this section a few of those recommendations have been highlighted; a full listing of recommendations addressed to national Governments is contained in the report of the Group of Experts (A/50/525-E/1995/122, annex). The recommendations set out below have high

relevancy to the increased responsibility of the Member States for mobilizing and consolidating their resources and managing their own development.

Recommendation 1

159. National Governments should strengthen their policy, advisory and administrative capacity in critical areas. Strong policy development advisory units having cooperative relationships with politicians and senior civil servants and with policy research and development institutions (think-tanks) should be established. National Governments need to enhance their capacity for policy formulation, management of future-shaping policies, and development of core learning programmes for senior officials.

United Nations response

160. The United Nations, through the programme in public administration and development, can organize exchanges of professional experiences, arrange professional training programmes, and prepare case studies on policy matters for dissemination through its clearing-house function.

Recommendation 2

161. Any restructuring of organizations, functions and management of the administrative apparatus should be treated as an ongoing function. In such restructuring, government institutions should be encouraged to develop strategic plans and indicators for performance improvement, to experiment and to monitor the performance of restructured units. To maintain a restructuring programme successfully, Governments should strengthen the capability of units responsible for this task and locate them where they can initiate and monitor reform measures.

United Nations response

162. The United Nations will continue to undertake comparative administrative restructuring studies and disseminate them on a regular basis. It will continue to provide advisory services with regard to the restructuring and capacity-building of training institutions, and conduct training programmes on a regional or subregional basis.

Recommendation 3

163. In order to provide responsive high-quality services, leaders should invest in people. Effective investment in human resources is also contingent upon top leaders themselves being learners. Specifically, to meet the urgent emerging responsibilities of training in economic management, people-centred development and public policy analysis, adequate resources need to be provided to upgrade the capacity of national training institutions, to develop a core group of professional trainers and to prepare training materials and case studies through independent research, consultancy and networking arrangements.

United Nations response

164. The United Nations will seek to create and sustain momentum for dynamic world-wide exchanges of information and ideas in the area of human resource development. It can establish guidelines and promote norms aimed at enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, integrity, responsiveness and accountability in public administration. It can assist in the creation of talent pools in developing countries and countries in transition; facilitate a mentor service in collaboration with top officials and in conducting training needs assessment; and help provide access to the best available technological systems and practices.

Recommendation 4

165. To achieve and sustain levels of high performance, Governments should (a) establish clear, complete and reconciled goals and policies and indicators of achievement; (b) consider minimizing rules, standards and norms from the centre so as to yield greater flexibility in operations; (c) measure results impartially; and (d) develop and adopt incentives that encourage compliance, arrest poor performance, and reward excellence.

United Nations response

166. The United Nations will continue to offer advisory services through interdisciplinary and multinational teams in areas including the management of change, performance management and measurement, information technology and strategic issues of governmental performance improvement. Where appropriate, it will develop management of change units within countries, which would monitor and facilitate performance in the public sector.

Recommendation 5

167. Public administration services should be provided to reflect the ever-changing needs of the citizens they serve. Ease of access for citizens is becoming important at a time when societies tend to emphasize the user-friendly aspect of the delivery of goods and services; close communication with citizens is also recommended, so as to understand their needs and preferences and to obtain feedback on their perceptions of services.

United Nations response

168. The United Nations can assist in the development of state-of-the-art technological communications networks, including on-line, e-mail, and a real-time communications network among management professionals to facilitate the provision of user-friendly services and ease of access to information for citizens.

Recommendation 6

169. Governments should encourage financial management at the grass-roots level to facilitate delivery of services and optimize expenditure control mechanisms for the disbursement of development funds.

United Nations response

170. The United Nations will assist Governments in creating and strengthening national capacities in fiscal policy analysis and economic management and in designing strategies aimed at creating and improving a proper environment and regulatory framework for capital flows for productive investments, promoting private sector development and increasing transparency and accountability.

Recommendation 7

171. Governments should seek objective evaluations and assessments of their privatization policies and programmes, seek to establish the appropriate place and timing of privatization in structural adjustment programmes and pay greater attention to performance improvement in parastatals.

United Nations response

172. The United Nations will, at the request of the Government, arrange for ex ante and/or ex post evaluation of their privatization policies and programmes, assist Governments in defining the role and scope of the public, combined and private sectors and suggest options in interaction modalities through technical assistance, the dissemination and exchange of country experiences and research on conditions for successful replications.

Recommendation 8

173. In the interest of advancing entrepreneurial development for economic growth, Governments should, through special targeted programmes, provide an enabling and encouraging environment for small and medium-sized enterprise initiation and expansion.

United Nations response

174. The United Nations will assist countries in collecting and analysing data by operating an information clearing-house, developing case studies of successes and failures and providing technical support.

Recommendation 9

175. National Governments should assume the responsibility for establishing environmental standards for all infrastructure policies. In many countries the level and scope of infrastructure development cannot depend too highly on the private sector. At the same time, national Governments must also guard against bad or risky investments of public resources.

United Nations response

176. The United Nations will assist Governments, as requested, in ensuring that an integrated approach to infrastructure development is taken by all levels of public administration during the planning stage, and that oversight bodies exist that are empowered. It will assist Governments in administrative capacity-

building and infrastructure management and in the development and execution of cost-effective programmes, particularly at the local level.

Recommendation 10

177. The codification of procedures should be pursued in such a manner as not to compromise the rights of citizens. Codification of laws must be undertaken in order to facilitate access to the guarantees of the law. Judicial review of public administration should be periodically evaluated and, if need be, strengthened to address corruption and injunctive remedies for maladministration.

United Nations response

178. The United Nations will assist Governments in organizing an appropriate legal framework of public administration and strengthening the judicial supervision of public administration. Through research, seminars and the provision of advisory services, it will assist Governments in the training of public officials and judges, arrange for the dissemination of experiences and facilitate research on comparative legal issues. It will also facilitate the exchange of experiences and disseminate guides for the fight against administrative corruption. This will be done in close cooperation with the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Secretariat.

Recommendation 11

179. For countries that are recovering from crisis and conflict, it is recommended that both immediate and transitional or long-term strategies be developed. The immediate strategy would include the assessment of national absorptive capacities, human and capital; the definition of policy issues and drafting of national policies; the restructuring and operation of key ministries for implementation of the defined policies; the restoration of management systems and tools (e.g., personnel, audit, information); the restoration and management of justice and public safety systems; the retention and enlistment of professional human resources; and the provision of crash training and retraining programmes.

United Nations response

180. The United Nations will provide special assistance to countries in post-conflict situations and collapsed States, helping to restore the effectiveness of public administration.

Recommendation 12

181. Governments should reinforce an understanding at all levels of society that aid is not budget support, and promote its use as a stimulant for development and economic growth in civil society. The interaction between political decision-making authorities and public administration agencies responsible for formulating and implementing development projects should be strengthened by supporting thorough analysis and review of public policies. It is crucial to ensure that the development budget is not overburdened with politically

determined projects without appropriate technical analysis. The incidence of cost overruns resulting from delayed implementation due to unrealistic project budgeting, procedural complexities in procurement of materials and constraints in recruiting appropriate personnel is quite high.

United Nations response

182. The United Nations will provide Governments with technical assistance aimed at strengthening institutional machinery for the evaluation, both ex ante and ex post, of consistency between development project outcomes and macro-objectives, such as growth, employment and income distribution.